

ANN ARBOR
Center for Independent Living

Dedicated to the success of children, youth, adults and seniors with disabilities at home, at school, at work and in the community since 1976.

September 9, 2013

RE: Support for HB 4792 and HB 4799

Dear Criminal Justice Committee Members:

The Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living (Ann Arbor CIL) is pleased to voice support for HB 4792 and HB 4799, legislation aimed at protecting non-motorized roadway users and educating motorists about safely sharing Michigan roads.

The mission of the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living is to promote the self-empowerment of persons with disabilities in order to achieve political equality, economic self-sufficiency, and community inclusion. The Ann Arbor CIL represents people from the disability communities from Washtenaw, Livingston, and Monroe counties. We work with and on behalf of people with disabilities towards their successes at home, at school, at work, and in the community. Thus, we promote the enactment for the proposed legislation to hold vehicular motorists accountable and responsible for their actions when infringing on the health and safety of consumers.

In Michigan, similar enhanced penalties already exist for reckless drivers who injure or kill construction workers, children in designated school zones, or operators of slow-moving farm vehicles. Vulnerable roadway user provisions are increasing in popularity across the country with multiple states enacting laws in recent years, and legislation pending in many others.

Michigan is making great strides in improving the safety of our roadways for all users. Our state leads the nation with nearly 90 locally adopted Complete Streets ordinances and resolutions. Coupled with these infrastructure improvements, and ongoing efforts to improve driver's education in our state, this legislation provides law enforcement and prosecutors with an enhanced set of tools that fill the gap between basic traffic infractions and more serious crimes.

Despite these efforts, a disproportionally high number of Michigan bicyclists, pedestrians, and wheel-chair users are involved in crashes that result in deaths or serious injuries.

In addition to infrastructure improvements, improved educational efforts are underway to increase awareness among Michigan drivers and bicyclists. To be viable, however, "Share the Road" campaigns must have a legal backbone, the foundations of which are enhanced protections for non-motorized users.



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We are very encouraged to see broad bipartisan support for these common sense bills, as demonstrated by the 20 individual Representatives from both sides of the aisle who signed on as co-sponsors of HB 4792 and HB 4799. This includes numerous members of the Criminal Justice Committee.

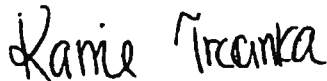
We are also pleased to note that the draft Michigan Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Action Plan 2013-2016 recommends the adoption of vulnerable roadway user legislation as a means to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.

On behalf of the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living and the citizens of Michigan that we serve, we strongly urge you to vote in favor of HB 4792 and HB 4799.

Sincerely,



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